



News Release

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Gov. Herbert Declares ‘Influenza Vaccination Week in Utah’

All Utahns now eligible to receive H1N1 flu vaccine

Salt Lake City, UT – With the H1N1 influenza virus continuing to circulate in Utah, Gov. Gary Herbert is encouraging all Utahns to get vaccinated and has declared January 10–16, 2010 ‘Influenza Vaccination Week in Utah.’ Utah’s push to vaccinate more citizens coincides with National Influenza Vaccination Week. Doses of H1N1 vaccine are plentiful throughout the state, and all Utahns are now eligible to become immunized.

Vaccine is widely available through the state’s 12 local health departments, private clinics and large pharmacy chains.

“While H1N1-related illness has continued to decrease over the past several weeks, we’re not out of the woods yet, and it’s not too late to get a flu shot,” said Gov. Herbert. “Right now, complacency is our biggest enemy. It’s still critical for Utahns who haven’t been vaccinated to do so now.”

A trademark of past influenza pandemics has been their tendency to strike in waves, with illness increasing over a number of weeks, decreasing, and eventually increasing again. Utah experienced its first wave of illness in May 2009; a second, stronger wave then hit in October and November.

“It’s certainly possible that we will experience a third wave of illness later this winter or early in the spring,” said Utah Department of Health Executive Director Dr. David Sundwall. “So far, about 20 percent of Utahns have been vaccinated, but we need as many people as possible to get the vaccine to reach a level of immunity that could fend off a third wave.”

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As part of Influenza Vaccination Week, the Salt Lake Valley Health Department will be hosting an immunization clinic at the State Capitol for Legislators and staff. The clinic is scheduled for Tuesday, January 12 from 7:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

By the middle of this week, Utah will have received 1,146,800 doses of the H1N1 vaccine. As of Saturday, January 2, the most recent date for which data are available, public and private health practitioners had administered approximately 516,594 doses.

Public health officials also want to remind parents that children under the age of 10 need two doses of the H1N1 vaccine, and that the doses should be given about 28 days apart.

In addition to getting immunized, these everyday preventive actions will help limit the spread of germs that cause influenza:

- Cough or sneeze into a tissue or your shirt sleeve;
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth – germs spread this way;
- Avoid close contact with sick people;
- Stay home from work or school when you are sick with influenza-like illness for at least 24 hours after your fever has broken and;
- Wash your hands regularly, especially after sneezing or coughing, using soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizers.

For more information on how to prevent influenza and where to find either a seasonal or H1N1 vaccine visit www.utahflufighters.org or dial 2-1-1.

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The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public’s health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.